KUTT

Kutt Number Three
Dyke Zine
Winter 2003

Chopped n Screwed
by Chasermassgrave

Emmeline and Marlcus perspiring in rip-off Miu Miu by Viviane Sassen

Jen
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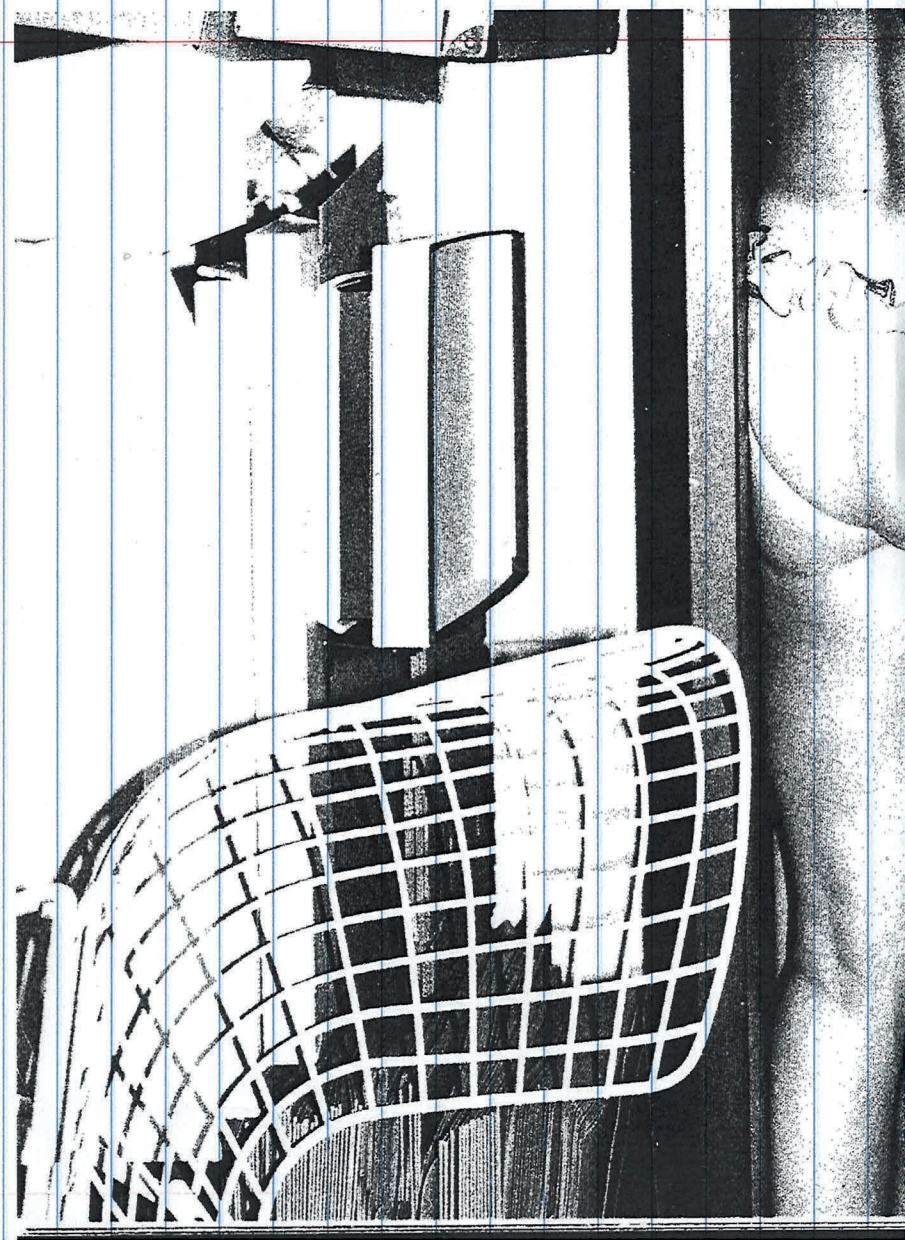

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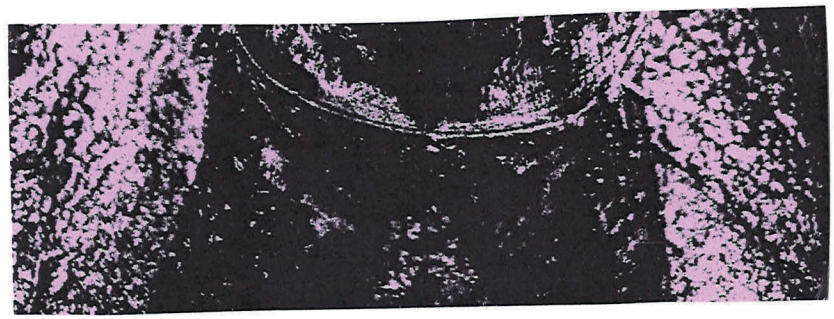
...WHO GETS TO BE A WRITER... AN INTERVIEW WITH JEN BERKOWITZ

Interview and portrait by Martien Mulder

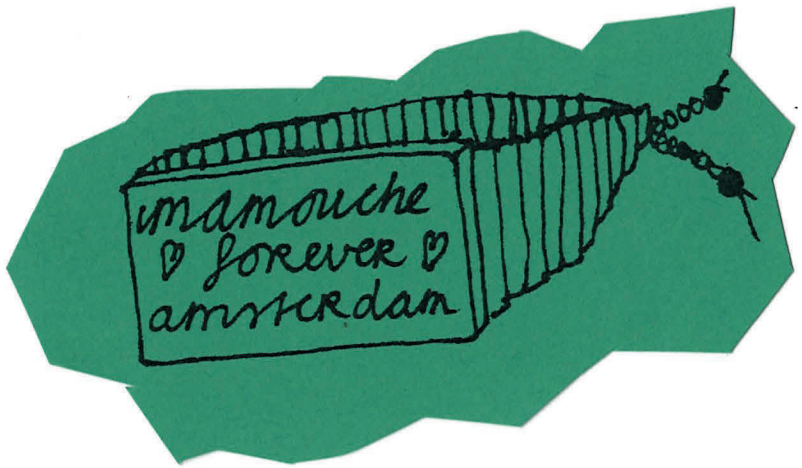


Toxic Girls...

Oomph

Tsurami
Addiction

NOW&WOW



...I SAT ON SOMETHING THAT REMINDED ME OF YOU...

Excuse me!?
Well, you know, when I used to smoke a lot of pot I was seeing this caricature of myself every time I lay down, it was terrible, it haunted me. It was a head, and the head was mine, and then there were two g-i-a-n-t legs walking up the city streets. My friend actually drew it for me, I was like I gotta tell someone and she was like, "Does it look like this?"
Hahaha. That's terrible! Is it still there when you smoke?
No, but there are a few new side effects to smoking, ha ha! I can just start talking and never stop. I sound like a complete idiot, and I can go on and on about something as if I am completely obsessed. Like when I just discovered Peaches, I would just talk about her all night to people who weren't even interested! I sounded really obsessed. Well, I must admit I was obsessed with Peaches.
What got you into Peaches?
She's got balls. *Fuck the pain away*. What she does is powerful and still funny. Shall we have another drink?
Hmmm. I'll have some Pastis. Do you want Pastis?
I didn't really like it before, but I'll try again. I had some absinthe recently.

Really, how was that?
I went absolutely crazy, everybody went crazy. I don't know if it was in our minds but...
Do people drink it a lot here?
It came out again already a few years ago and people like new things so...And because I didn't like the liquorice taste of it I decided to do just shots. I quickly lost my mind. It didn't feel like being drunk but it was a different sort of sensory experience, I don't know, a bit like ecstasy. Oh shit, I forgot something! I have to make a phonecall.

"Hey, I've been meaning to call you.
No no, I am your girl, I can come through for you. I don't mean to flake!
...
Well, tell me what the option is, if I get into a cab right now will I be in time? Oh, really? I am sorry. No, really I am!"

Hmmm, I was supposed to be somewhere, I guess I'll have to go!
Any rumors you need to share with me before you go?
Janet Jackson is dating a woman. I think it's her choreographer, that's what I heard. Bye now!

week long. It's just going through what you need to go through and then it's done, rather then being two people coming together. It's not so much a natural way to be, it's quite selfish.

But you can do it?

I have in the past. It's just sharing something at that moment, knowing nothing can come from it. Sharing it for what it is. Well, so many people feel a different way about it. For me, it takes much longer to feel vulnerable, like emotionally and the whole thing. Sex can be an outlet to express intensity, it's like a space - a space to express yourself not knowing where it goes emotionally.

But within a week it already gets emotional, right? You've shared more than sex alone?

If I get to the point of wanting sex with someone I am already in love, so then it becomes really hard to not want more.

Yeah, it's true. I've had affairs like that and I was the one who couldn't let go. I didn't understand why it had to get lost. I was already vulnerable. It can be such a trap, because there's always this imbalance. And you never really know the other person. One of the two always gets hurt more than the other, I think. Am I rambling?

What do you mean?

I get so tired of my thoughts sometimes. It feels like I am rambling on and on about all these questions that I don't even have answers to. It's just that I don't know, in conversations I always share the process of thinking but it's not always going somewhere.

I think it's beautiful to let someone in on that process rather than giving them the final statements!

Oh well. I am just jealous of people who can express themselves really well. Some people just know how to put it out there, while I process a lot. That's probably why I like writing. And I love poetry. I admire good poets.

Like who?

I think Jill Scott is a wonderful poet. She has just a great tone of voice. I look at that as a wonderfully perfect expression. Her words, her rhythm, the flow, the ideas - she's moving.

Do you ever reach that in your writing?

Sometimes.

Which writers do you admire?

I just finished a book by Dave Eggers called *A Heartbreaking Work of Staggering Genius*. I loved his style of writing. I thought it was so honest! And he makes fun of himself so much. I totally identify with his self-consciousness, and he is able to convey it in such a way that you understand the irony of just being, you know?

You love his humour I guess?

Yeah, like sometimes you think people really embarrass themselves but they're not victims - they open themselves up but they're not exploiting themselves. That's so great, they let you laugh at them and they're still so strong. They're strong through vulnerability.

Vulnerability, hmmm. There's one. What makes you most insecure when you meet someone you like?

I don't wanna appear heavy, so I hide my heavy side. And my ass.

When they make you feel like 'the best you', in most ways possible. That's love, and it's also self-love. Being totally comfortable. Being yourself.

Can you totally be yourself when you fall in love?

Fall in love?

Yeah.

Hmmm. To fall in love? I don't know.

You don't know? What is falling in love to you anyway?

Jesus, that's hard to say. Do you know?

I think falling in love is projecting the things you need the most on the person who can give it to you best.

I guess you're right.

But everybody is changing all the time - that makes it so complicated.

Exactly.

But what is the one aspect a person needs for you to fall in love with them?

Humour, definitely. Being funny is very important to me for some reason. It's not that complicated, it's just fun. I enjoy the light side of myself!

So where do you go out in the city to have all this fun?

I go out with friends to all kinds of places, to do whatever we feel like. I don't go to lesbian bars that much. I used to, but I don't anymore.

You don't?

Going to lesbian bars and gay spaces was more something that I pursued because I thought that I could be myself there, like I needed to experience comfort in a public space - a validation of my desires. Feeling connected to a community because it validates you so that you know it's real. It helped me become comfortable with myself.

So it was important to you before?

Yes, but now I am not defined by it anymore, because it doesn't suit me as much as it did. I no longer go out for the purpose of being in a scene. I think those all-women places can become too focused on meeting people, and that makes me uncomfortable. I don't like it- it's too intense.

I totally agree.

Like on a Friday and a Saturday, all women go out and there's this giddy energy, it's like, "O.K., we have about six hours, let's GO GO GO."

And you come in and you feel like you're in a zoo or something!

I know! But I don't have any judgement on it - it just didn't suit me to keep going to the same places, as they were all-women.

There's nothing wrong about it, but it's too predictable, it's too much of a script. You know exactly what is supposed to happen. I have to say, at the time I felt it was really liberating, but then it became confining.

How did that make you feel?

I felt like I had to come out again. First you come out as a lesbian but now I am coming out of coming out, do you know what I mean? I am trying to come out of the constraints that I put on myself, which is what happens when you label yourself, and it doesn't suit me anymore. And people ask me, "Are you turning back?" What the fuck does that mean? It's so stupid!

It's so irrelevant. So now you go to a lot of different spaces?

Yeah, I have a lot of gay friends, so I go to gay male places a lot, which is liberating in a way too. You're not invisible but there's no sexual tension whatsoever. No one is paying attention to you when you're dancing.

Yesterday you were at Luxx?

Luxx is a good mix of men and women. There's just a good energy of people who want to be there, who feel comfortable in the space. It's not hyper-sexual or something. There wasn't an intense pick-up thing going on. I like it there.

But do you want to be free of that sexual energy?

No, not necessarily. I mean, that sexual energy is ultimately inside you. Being in a gay male place gets boring too. Feeling totally liberated while the men are in this completely different mindset, just looking and looking for sex, that gets kind of old after a while! The sexual energy in those places is like so intense. It's like bullets that graze your head. You're there, and you're in it but it has nothing to do with you. It's crazy.

I was in the Dutch beachclub El Dorado once, and I just did not succeed in ordering a drink. The bar guy totally ignored me, no, he didn't ignore me, he just didn't SEE me. It was like he couldn't help it. Anyway, do you have a lot of relationships or one-night stands?

I am not much of a one-night stander. I am more into the one-week stands. Is that a girl thing?

I think it's the girl's interpretation of the one-night stand, yes. We need a little more time. But you are able to get into it with someone for sex, enjoy it, and let it go after a week?

It just depends on how you get into a situation. It can be very selfish, even if it's a

Martien: You live in LA, but you're here in NY for a while. Why is that?
Jen: I went to school here, worked here, lived here. I came to consider NY my home, but I don't know, NY can be distracting.
Distracting?
Yeah, I think you can get lost here, I mean, doing the same things in the same routine for a long time. It's important to sort of get away sometimes. NY doesn't always allow the space to reflect, because you're so busy having to survive. I had to physically remove myself from NY in order to get that space. I've been living in LA for two years now.
So how does it feel to be back?
It's great, it's wonderful. It's the energy I guess, which is the love affair of my life!
And there hasn't been a love affair similar to that?
Hmmm, not quite.
What do you do back in LA?
I write, I do music articles for website content. I have always had a passion for writing, but I never considered myself a writer. This sort of landed in my lap really.
Are you writing what you want to write?
I like the process of writing, I find a lot of truth in it. Right now what I write is very informational, educational. I am translating parts of history and I take it very personally. I want to present the info in a way that is honest. It's important to look for what's not talked about in general. It's all a matter of whose experience is centered. I try to find the people that are lost.
That's a good way to say it. It's kind of noble. And why is music your subject?
Music is incredibly important to me. The mystery of music, the force, the power. It's so emotional.
What would you write if you were totally free?
To use language to create a feeling - that's amazing. I am interested in capturing the experience of being human in all its complexity, conveying the essence of any given moment using words. Poetry, stories, music. My personal writing is very much just to get things out though. It's just journaling in a very intense way, without being able to stop the stream of consciousness pouring out! It's very powerful for me - once something is written, it's the truth and I'll have to deal with it. It's very confronting.
So you write uncensored?
In my personal writing, yes, I do, which is why I never thought of pursuing writing. When I was young I'd write to work out my thoughts and struggles, and I became very quiet because writing was much easier than actually talking. I never shared it. It was about a piece of me that never got communicated any other way, so it was very honest. I got used to the idea that somehow it was this intensely personal thing that wasn't meant to be shared. I still have a lot of dialogue in my head that doesn't come out talking, just writing.
Where did you grow up?
In New Jersey.
Tell me something about your background.
Well, I think I started writing because my father was sick with cancer from the time I was 9, and he died when I was 16. That really shaped everything. So much seemed unspoken and I have always felt the need to express how complex feelings and situations can be. The experience gave me a lot to think about and I was so focused on what is life and what is death? Everything was so crucial. At that age it was so raw. The start of my life was really the end of his. So that turned into heavy writing, ha ha.
I can imagine! You were so young!
Yes I was.
And now you have journals full of heavy, honest writing.
Yes I do.
What is honesty to you?
Being yourself without a constant awareness or consciousness of who you are, or who you want to be, or who you want people to think you are. Being sincere and open to the moment. Finding comfort in being sincere, maybe. I don't know.
Are you sincere?
I think when you really feel yourself, and when you realize we're all the same in a way, you can connect to others. They reflect you. You pick the people who make a good you, or a funny you, or whatever. I feel drawn to people who make me feel myself, so I can just be. No matter how I feel. That leads to honesty. I feel very honest when I'm with such friends.
And when do friends turn into lovers?

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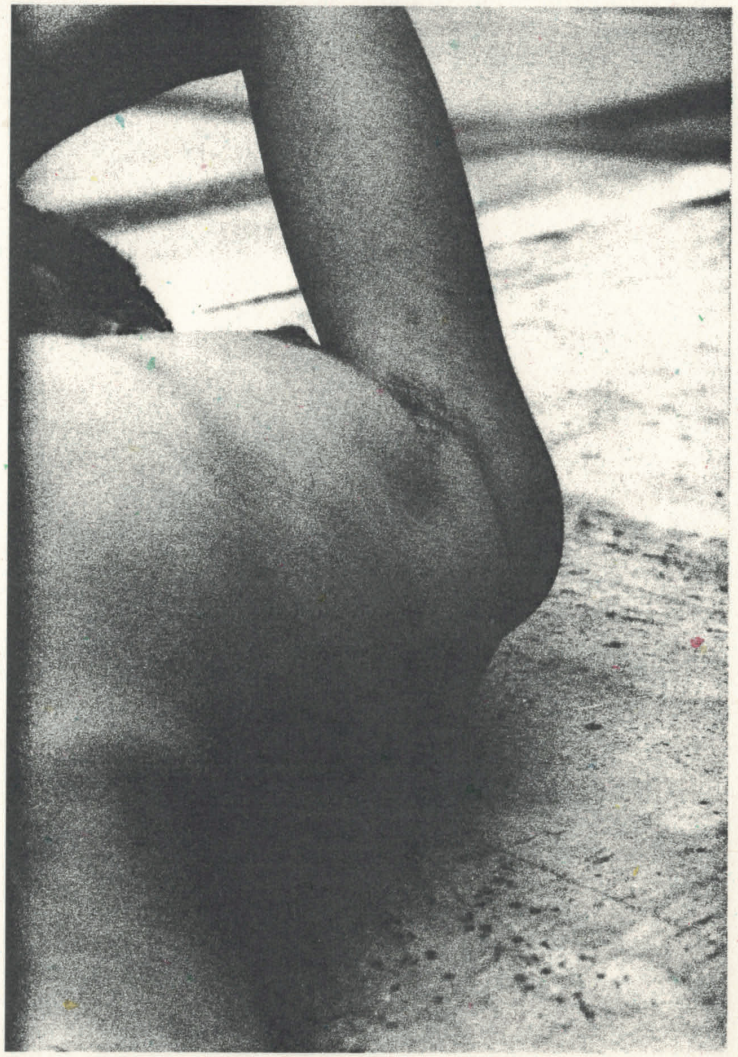

Eleonore at last!
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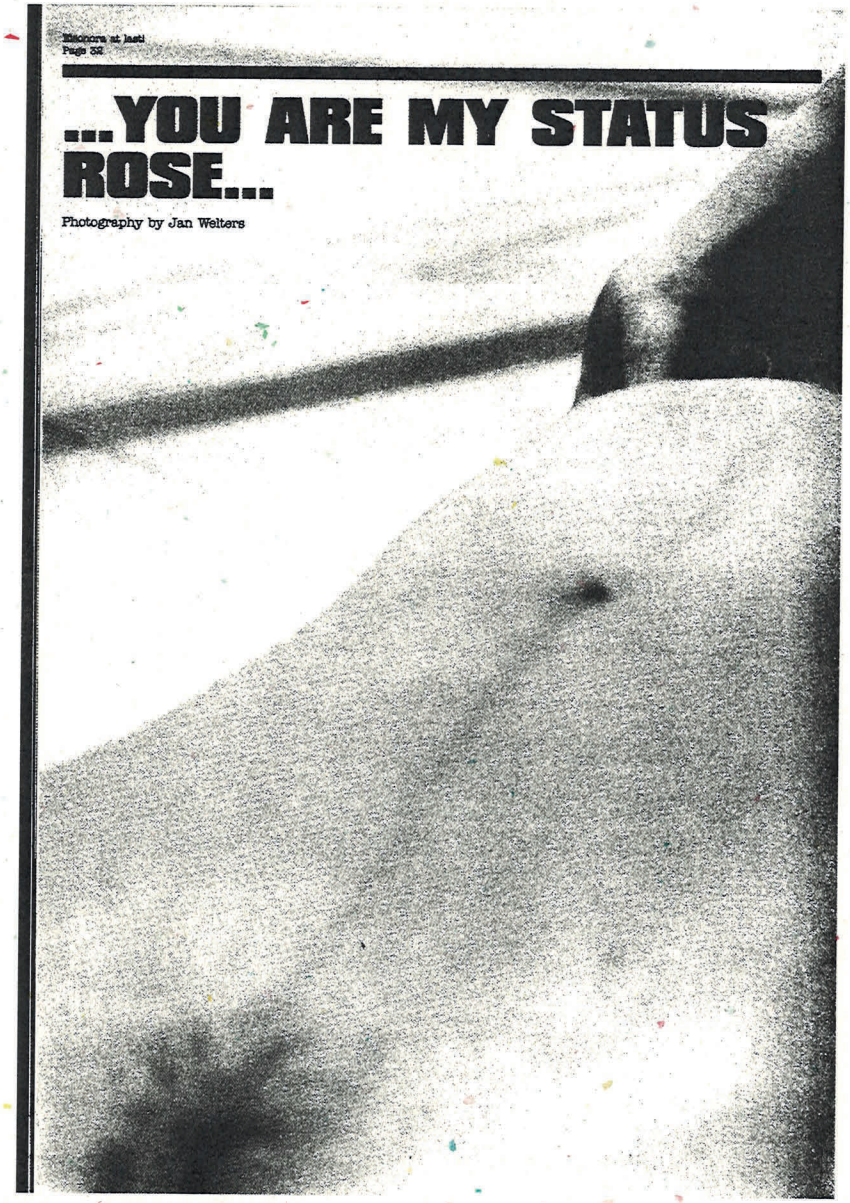
...YOU ARE MY STATUS ROSE...

Photography by Jan Welters



Eleonore at last!
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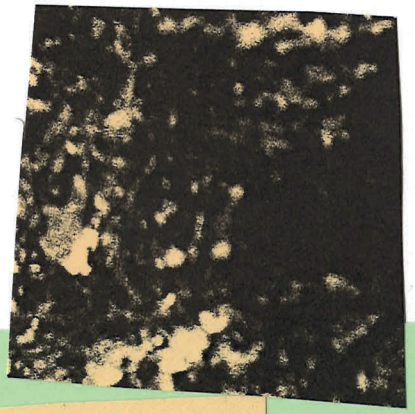

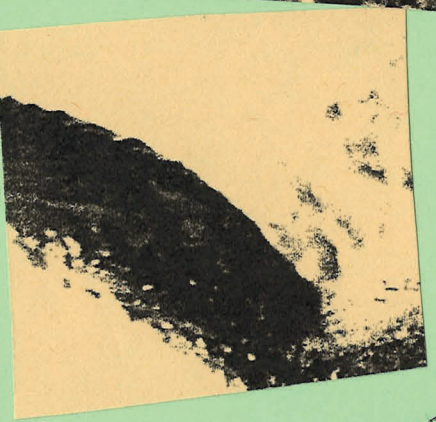

Miu Miu undressed
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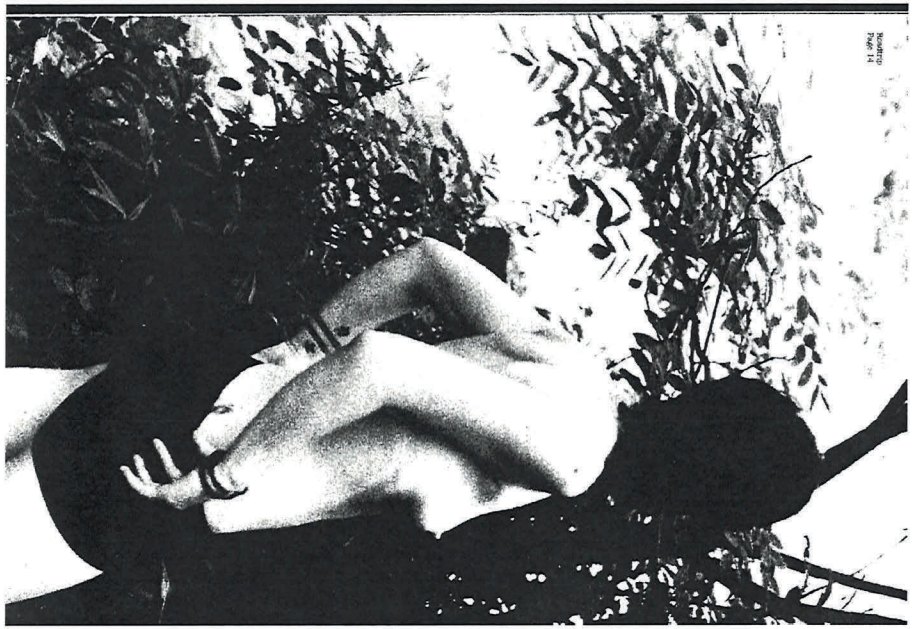

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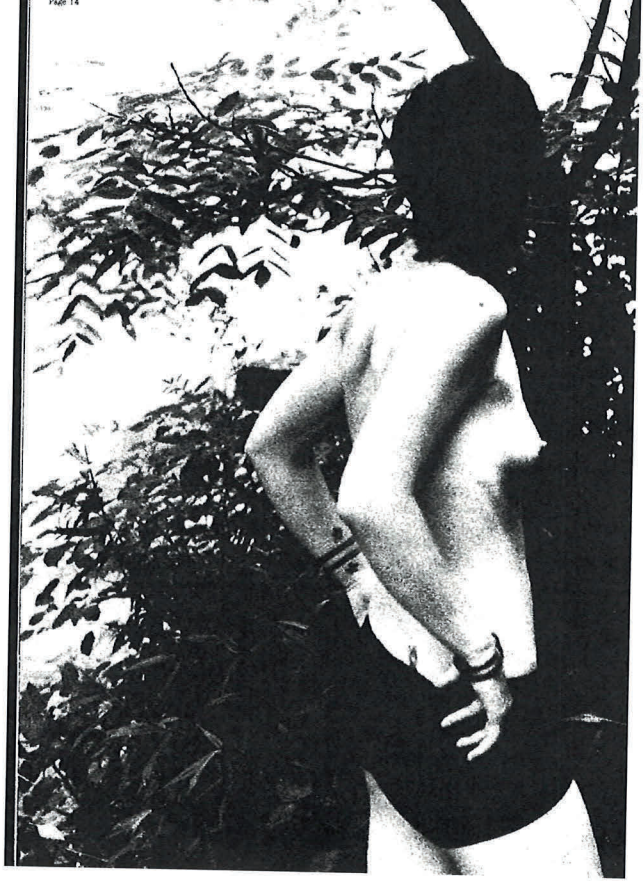
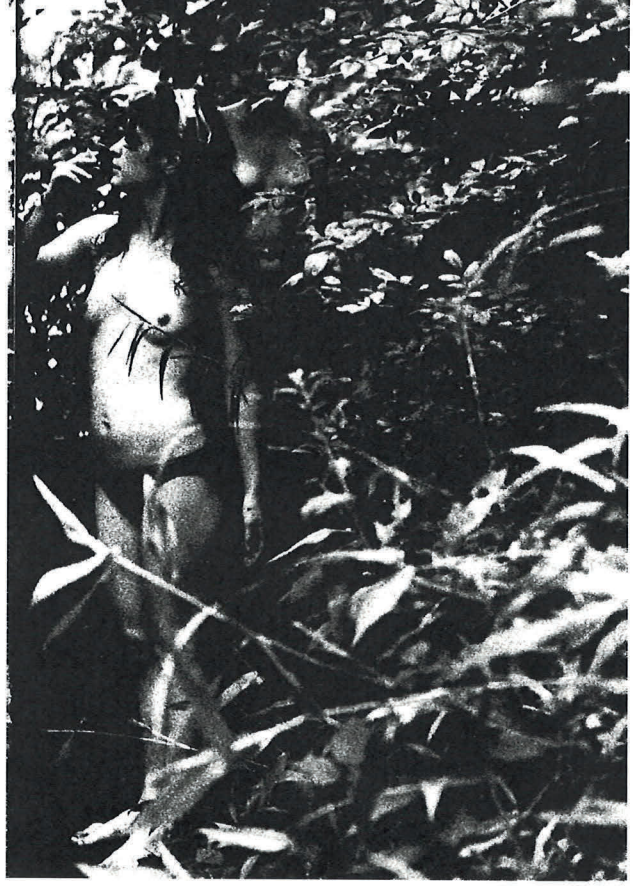
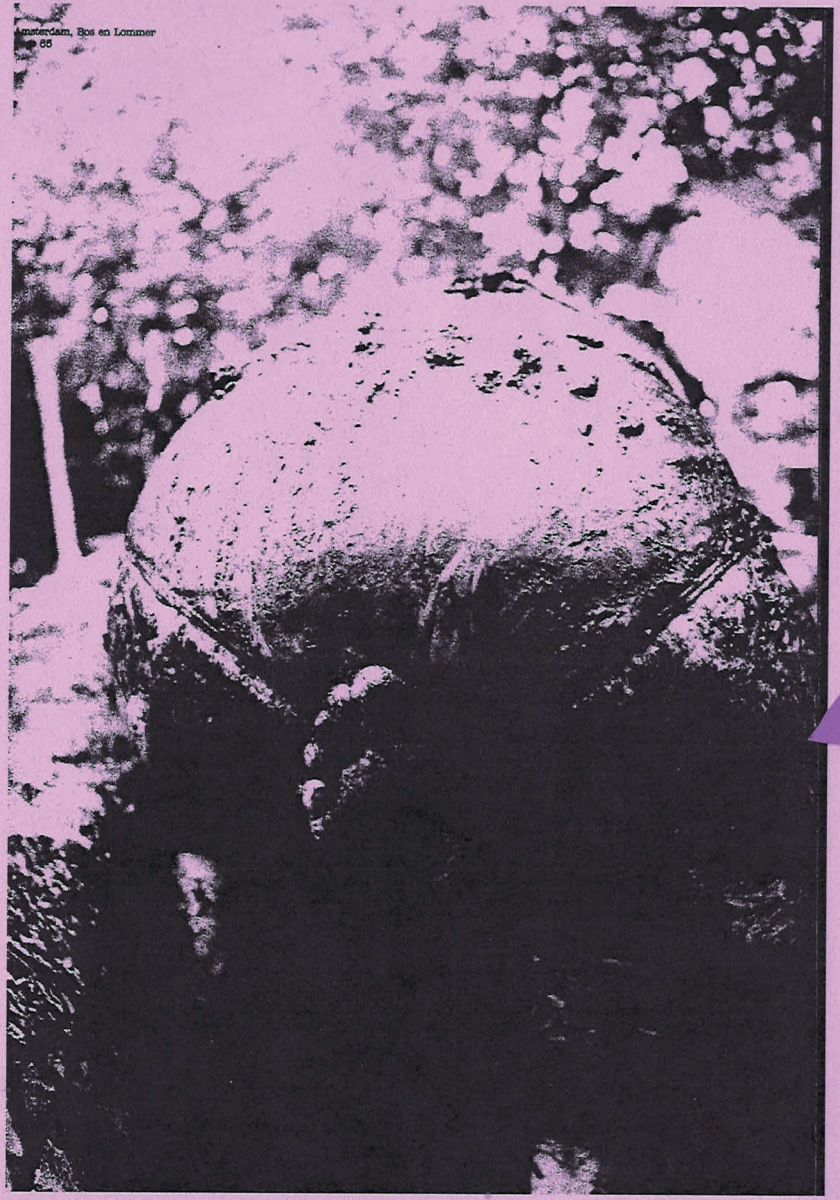


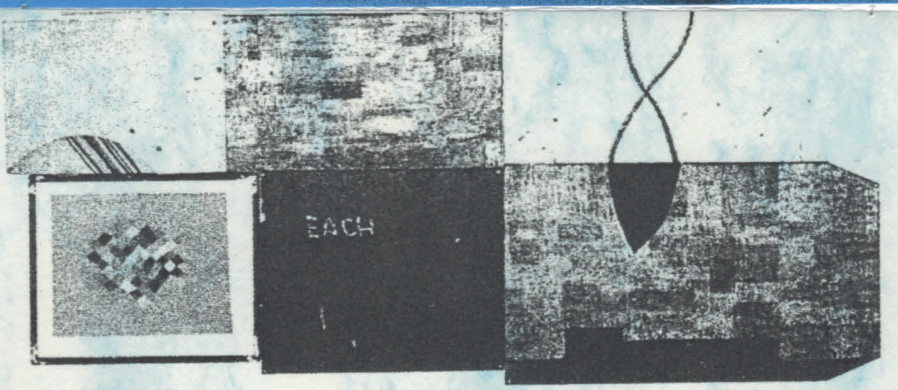




Amsterdam, Bos en Lommer
'66

...YOU ARE MY STATUS ROSE...

Photography by Jan Welters



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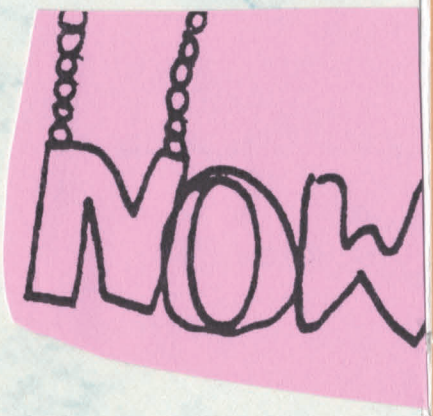
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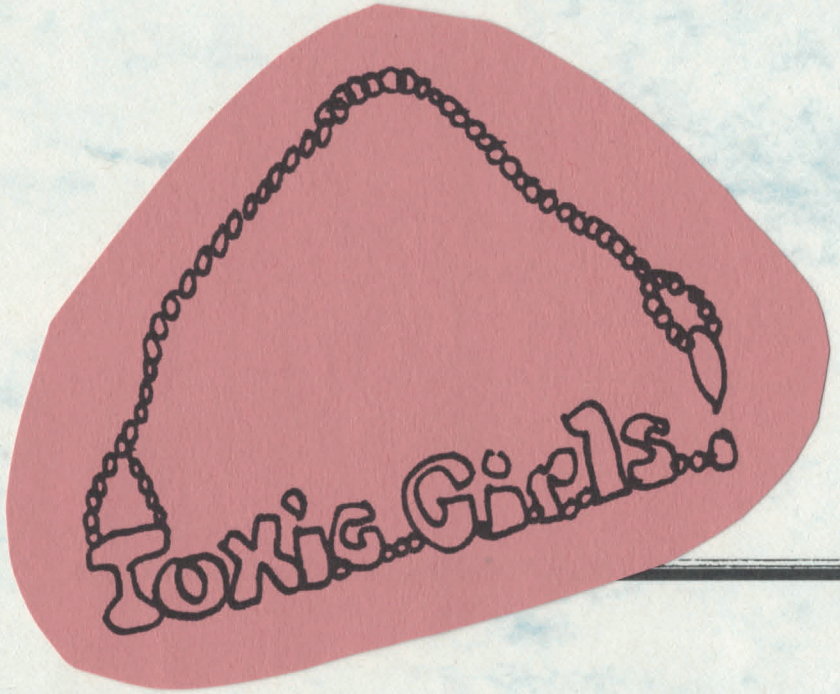
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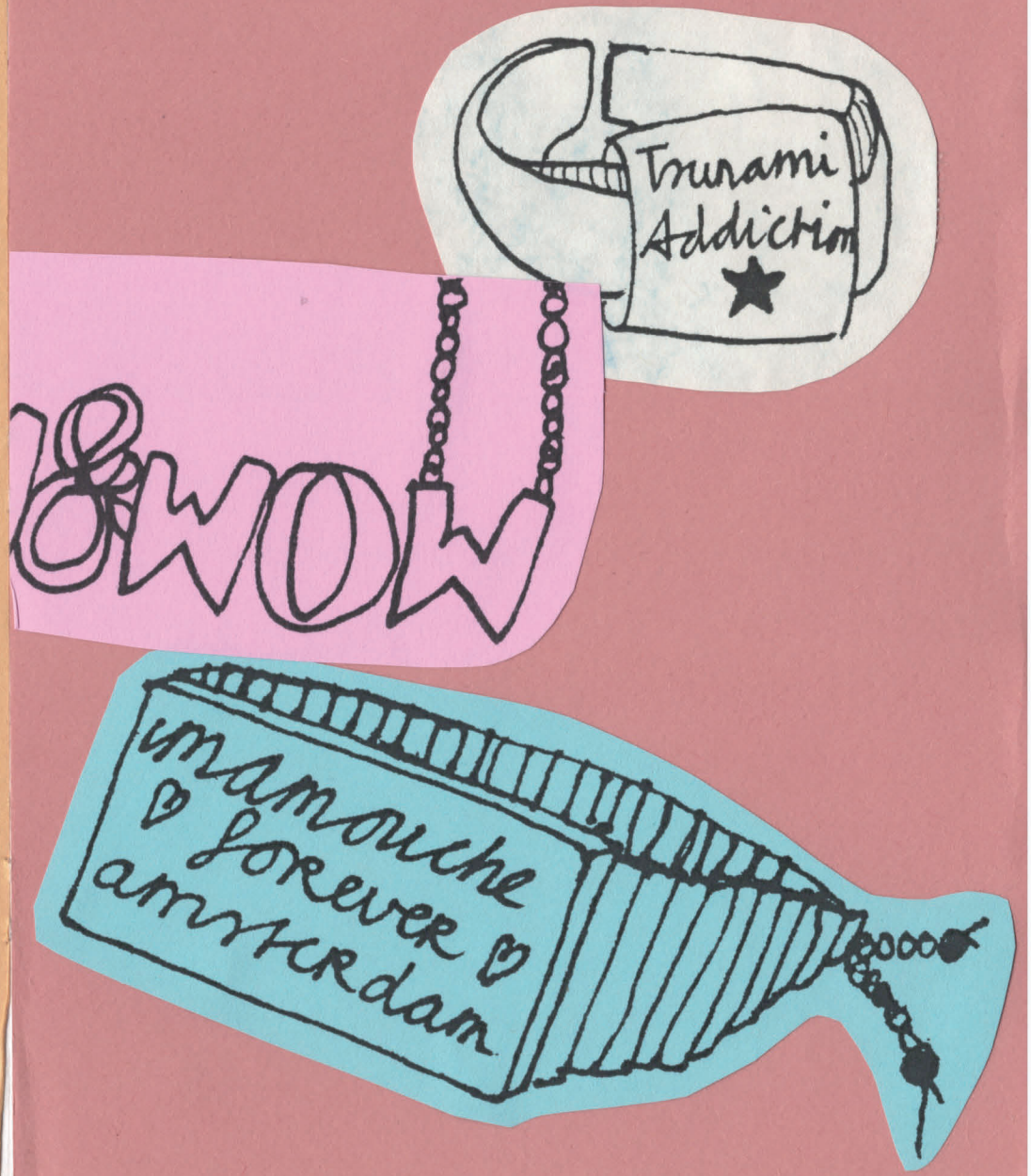
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